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FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3148
INFO RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 6458
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 0119
RUEHJO/AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG 2160
RUEHDU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 3304

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 000169

AF/S FOR RMARBURG AND MJAMES

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV KDEM SF

SUBJECT: PROTESTS OVER LACK OF HOUSING CONTINUES

¶1. (U) On July 30, 2009 about 300 people gathered at the entrance to Masiphumelele, an informal settlement near Fish Hoek in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town to protest against lack of housing. The protesters blocked Kommetjie Road obstructing access to

motorists on their way to work and burnt tires and stoned pa3@tuQZ1QMca reside in an informal

dwelling. While most live in informal settlements, significant proportions have erected shacks in the backyard of another property, a distinctly South African phenomenon. Backyard dwellings have historically been overlooked by housing policies that focus on upgrading and eradicating informal settlements. Previously, backyard dwellers were perceived as marginalized, living in appalling conditions and exploited by cavalier landlords.

¶4. (U) Several protests over housing have taken place in the area over the last few weeks as backyard dwellers are unhappy about the Amakhaya Ngoku housing development in the area. Amakhaya Ngoku (meaning homes now) was formed in 2006 by local residents after a fire destroyed about 400 shacks, leaving more than 1 000 people homeless. After months of consultations and meetings residents agreed the shortage of land made free-standing houses impossible and settled for 352 sectional title apartments. The project will offer residents a rent-to-buy scheme that allows them to rent their homes for four years at R400 a month, after which they can buy and own them. The project, which was approved by the Department of Local Government and Housing has not been without controversy. Ever since the development was proposed, various groups of residents have clashed over the plan and its proposed site, an area formerly suggested as school premises. Long-time residents of Masiphumelele support the Amakhaya project, but people who arrived later and erected shacks on theOrQQwith the MEC for Housing, Bonginkosi Madikizela. Amakhaya Ngoku is under immense pressure to start construction in order to fulfill the funding conditions of some of its international sponsors. Foreign donations are contributing more than R35-million to the project and failure to start building soon could put some of this money at risk, as well as increase building costs. PolAsst spoke with the media spokesperson for the MEC for Housing who declined to comment on the current situation in Masiphumelele.

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